

## THE CITY

# Board of Ed president re-elected

■ William C. Thompson Jr., in the post since '96, promises a year of change

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ADVANCE CITY HALL BUREAU

Board of Education President William C. Thompson Jr. yesterday was unanimously re-elected to the leadership post he's held since 1996, promising an exciting year of change and further fundamental reform in New York City's 1.1 million student public school system.

"I look forward to the next year with great excitement," said Thompson after the unanimous vote of the seven-member board at its Brooklyn headquarters. "It's going to be a year of change and change is good. We're embarked on an ambitious agenda. There's a bumpy road ahead, but we're going to keep our eye on the goal of making this the best public school system in the nation."

Thompson's re-election, which had been in doubt as recently as last week, comes on the heels of Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew's



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William C. Thompson Jr.

announcing the most sweeping overhaul of the school system in a generation.

The chancellor's shake-up includes everything from the firing of five district superintendents to the central board's taking over more than 40 schools in poorly performing districts. The central board has also moved aggressively to end social promotion and drastically reduce class size.

With an eye to continuing the reforms, Thompson said the board will move to re-work its commit-

tee structure to allow more input from experts from outside the school system.

"We want to provide more of a public forum," Thompson explained. "We want a system that sets high standards."

Jerry Cammarata, Staten Island representative to the board, described Thompson as a "a good leader and fair listener to the needs of Staten Island and the rest of the city."

Cammarata said Thompson's priorities have included additional cash for early childhood instruction, added seat capacity and the "continuous infusion" of technology into the schools.

Yesterday's vote was short and sweet; Thompson's was the only name placed in nomination and he picked up every vote.

But several weeks back, when word began circulating that Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani wanted him out, Thompson's fate was very much up in the air.

Last week Giuliani admitted he had seriously considered pressuring the board to replace Thompson, but later changed his mind.

Thompson and Crew had angered the mayor by publicly opposing City Hall's proposal to finance private school tuition with tax dollars for some students.